

# Edenbridge Hop Gardens and Village Oasts



The oast house is a quintessential part of Kent and are an easy guide to where hops were once cultivated and dried. The existence of so many oast houses around Edenbridge confirms that the town actively participated in this agricultural activity.

The Tithe Awards of 1846 lists the fields and properties and (in most cases) indicates fields being used for hops as distinct from 'arable' and provides evidence of about 225 acres of hops around Edenbridge that year.

The hop fields were fragmented with some 30 farms or properties participating in their cultivation, with Gabriels having the largest contribution (23 acres). The fields were also widely scattered. Fields to the south of the town at Leydens (14 acres) and Buses (12 acres), while to the north-east were Broxham (17 acres) and Holdfast (9 acres). Centrally, Crouch House had 10 acres and Doggett's Farm just under nine acres. EVM Archives



**The oast house in the centre of the road at Chiddingstone, now a private residence called Triangle Oast, c.1960.**

Photographer: H. Camburn. Image: P2001.1.100



**Barn and [square] Oast at Little Postlings, Five Fields Lane, Four Elms, 1941.**

Image: P2008.1521

It was in Victorian times that the lasting innovation in oast house construction, the roundel or square shaped kiln tapering to a cowl at the apex, was introduced and came to epitomise hops and hop growing.



**Oasts at Larkins Farm, Chiddingstone, c.1930.** Image: P2003.810

Now converted to a private residence called Five Oasts.

An oast house is used to dry the hops, usually through the flow of heated air. The hops are raked in to dry and then raked out to cool before being bagged up and sent to the brewery. Many oasts are now converted to dwellings.



**Crockham Farm and Oast, Crockham Hill, early 20th century.**

Image: P2013.2041



**Bough Beech Oast, Winkhurst Green, 1960**

Image: P2015.2741

Situated at the north end of Bough Beech Reservoir and previously the oast for Winkhurst Farm, this single round kiln oast was later converted to a museum by Kent Wildlife Trust. Now closed. Winkhurst Farmhouse was the first building to be moved to the Weald and Downland Museum in Singleton.